promote convergence of viewpoints on these issues. They also called for enhanced regional and international cooperation to combat the menace of terrorism.

(c) and (d) India's offer to host a G-15 meeting at an appropriate level in preparation for the Third WTO International Conference was welcomed by the participants at the Ninth G-15 Summit. They also endorsed India's proposal which suggested adoption of a strategic sectors approach for South-South cooperation focussing on core areas like bio-technology, information technology and infrastructure development.

Indo-Pak Talks

357. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have finalised the stand to be taken for next round of Indo-Pak talks to resolve the problem of Jammu and Kashmir; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) India is committed to adressing the subject of Jammu & Kashmir as part of the composite dialogue process with Pakistan. Government has called upon Pakistan to end its support to and instigation of cross-border terrorism. This demand, as well as our position on J&K, will be appropriate reiterated to the Pakistan side in our discussions.

Lifting of Sanctions on MFI Loans

358. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have asked the US of lift sanctions of MFI loans to India; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the US thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Government's position regarding unilateral restrictive economic measures is clear. Government regards all such measures as unjustified and counter-productive and is of the view that they should be lifted. Government, however will not negotiate security issues on this basis. Government have also stated that for the successful conclusion of talks, creation of a positive environment by our interlocutors is a necessary ingredient.

(b) In partial exercise of waiver authority given by the US Congress, US Government on November 7, 1998 announced lifting of some restrictive economic measures against India. These relate to programmes of three US institutions namely the EXIM Bank, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the Trade Development Authority (TDA). The US Government also lifted restrictions on activities of Commercial US Banks and International Military Education and Training Programme (IMET). Bilateral and multilateral programmes of assistance in basic needs areas are also continuing.

The US Government stated that it was taking the step in recognition of the progress in the dialogue.

Recently, the US did not obstruct approval of a World Bank loan for infrastucture and power development in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Cancellation of PM's stop over at Bonn En-Route Jamaica

359. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Prime Minister decided to cancel his stopover at

Bonn en-route to the G-15 Summit in Jamaica;

(b) if so, whether this decision was in protest against Germany's comments on attacks on Christians in Gujarat; and

(c) if not, the reasons for cancelling the visit?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The visit could not take place for reasons connected with the programme an scheduling.

Decision on CTBT

360. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:
SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned as 'India to sign CTBT in return for lifting sanctions: USA' Published in "Statesman" dated February 3, 1999;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that Mr. James Rubin, the State Department spokesman virtually endorsed the outcome of the talks between the Foreign Minister, Shri Jaswant Singh and the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Strobe Talbott; and

(c) if so, the response of Government thereto and the reasons for Government to give such a commitment without having national consultation and evolving a consensus?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In State Department briefing on February 1, 1999, the US Spokesman James Rubin Characterised the Indo-US dialogue as "productive" and mentioned that it "generated new momentum"

(c) Government's position on the CTBT is determined purely by considerations of national interest. The building of a national consensus will continue to guide the Government's approach to the CTBT.

The Indian position regarding CTBT remains as stated by the Prime Minister in UNGA in September, 1998 "India, having harmonised its national imperatives and security obligations and desirous of continuing to cooperate with the international community is now engaged in discussions with key interlocutors on a range of issues, including the CTBT. We are prepared to bring these discussions to a successful conclusion, so that the entry into force of the CTBT is not delayed beyond September 1999. We expect that other countries, as indicated in Article XIV of the CTBT, will adhere to this treaty without conditions."

India's Signing of CTBT

361. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:
SHRI VAYALAR RAVI:
SHRI PARAG CHALIHA:
SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item published in the Hindustan Times dated 3rd February, 1999 captioned "India ready to sign test ban treaty, Talbott tells Albright" before September 1999 in return for lifting some of the more stringent sanctions imposed after its nuclear tests last May;

(b) if so, what are the details of eighth round of Indo-US talks held, recently in New Delhi and outcome thereof; and